



F. A Link to Neighborhood Vitality

Planning Principles: Areas of development along the edge of the new Poplar Point Park should feel like the extension of surrounding neighborhoods in Historic Anacostia. New uses should serve the community, be of compatible scale, complement existing uses on Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue and help transition from existing neighborhoods to the waterfront.

New development planned in the Poplar Point target area will be designed to establish a new, attractive, populated edge to the park and an easy link to the waterfront. The existing 11 acres of private land in the target area along Howard Road will be incorporated into this neighborhood expansion and joined by additional sites for a variety of uses. These uses can contribute economic vitality, job and business opportunity, youth activities and living options to Historic Anacostia, Barry’s Farm, Fairlawn and surrounding communities.

New uses will replace the unattractive edge currently facing the park – a 700-car parking garage and METRO station, fences, and the barriers of I-295 and the Frederick Douglass Bridge approach. Since the added development areas will be primarily on lands recaptured from highways and ramps, their public ownership can assure that city and community targets are met.

1 Location, Scale and Design

Plans for new neighborhood development near Poplar Point Park begin with the opportunities in place and expand from there. In all cases, this development should maintain a scale and articulation of design that is compatible and contributing to the pedestrian scale and fabric of the existing neighborhood, maintaining low and moderate heights and breaking development in any one block into identifiable, distinctive parts.

Howard Road

As an existing opportunity area abutting the national park lands, the focus will be first on Howard Road where some 11 acres are either already available in the private real estate market or committed to a variety of community-based uses. The plan envisions embracing this private development area within an expanded mixed-use area. To appropriately link these areas and provide a more direct and attractive route to Poplar Point Park and activities along the River, Howard Road may need some adjustment and improvements and some of the development parcels may be reconfigured.

Anchors to MLK in Historic Anacostia

With improvements to the Park, should also come incentives to take best advantage of two anchor sites along MLK in Historic Anacostia. The first, most likely, would be the Gateway site near the Good Hope Road entrance to Anacostia Park. Here links to a beautiful new waterfront, cultural and recreational uses in the vicinity, and improved 11th Street Bridge access should help to trigger interest in a mixed-use, job producing solution on this site. The second anchor site of long-term potential will be the WMATA block at the south end of Historic Anacostia. This site, though committed to continued use as a regional, circulator bus interchange point with METRO offers long-term potential for joint development (to be implemented by WMATA), making an economic contribution of new housing or commercial development along MLK.

Park Crescent

The third area of neighborhood development will contained along a new park edge road, generally following the shape of a crescent embracing the park. Pedestrian scale blocks with roads oriented to the park and the river will be created, assuring a prominence to the public realm whether the blocks are used for residential, cultural or other park and economic development oriented uses. The result will be a great place to live, play, visit and realize a powerful connection to the riverfront.



Figures 47, 48: Historic neighborhood fabric in Anacostia; Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue



2 Targeted Uses

Among the uses targeted for neighborhood development will be housing, including a significant affordable component of 20% on public ownership lands. Cultural uses including museums, memorials, and educational facilities will be encouraged and linked to job training and youth programs in the community. Local-serving retail facilities will be anticipated both as they link to support such uses on MLK Avenue, as they serve new residential areas and as they partner with cultural and riverfront destinations in the Poplar Point plan. Other employment generating uses will be considered as they fit in scale and contribute to the public life of the neighborhood and the park.

3 Design Principles and Prototypes

Development of the plans for Poplar Point has involved the collection and review of numerous national and international examples of park, and park edge design. These examples have been utilized in public meetings to illustrate the broad design potentials of the site and to illicit response and direction from community participants. In one of the corridor-wide workshops specific prototypes for parks and for housing or other development along the river were evaluated and preferences recorded. Based upon this review, and the broad waterfront experience of the design and planning team, selected prototypes are included in this report for direction and inspiration to future designers.

Broad design principles underlay the work of the planning and design team and have been guided by the preferences of community groups. The urban design framework shown in the attached diagram highlights the broad concepts of the Poplar Point design approach. Principles noted below reinforce that direction with some broad-based concepts for three critical components of the Poplar Point Plan: 1) the park, 2) the park edge, and 3) the cultural/mixed-use development area which extends Historic Anacostia to the riverfront.

Poplar Point Park

- Serve as an anchor and a gateway to the whole of Anacostia Park
- Make the park accessible to the community as well as District-wide residents. Encourage access by a variety of transportation modes including METRO, buses, water taxi, bikes, and pedestrian trails.
- Preserve sweeping views across the River of the Washington Monument and Capitol.
- Highlight L'Enfant's historic New Jersey axis by receiving it a signature park facility such as a museum, major monument, memorial, performance space or similar improvement.

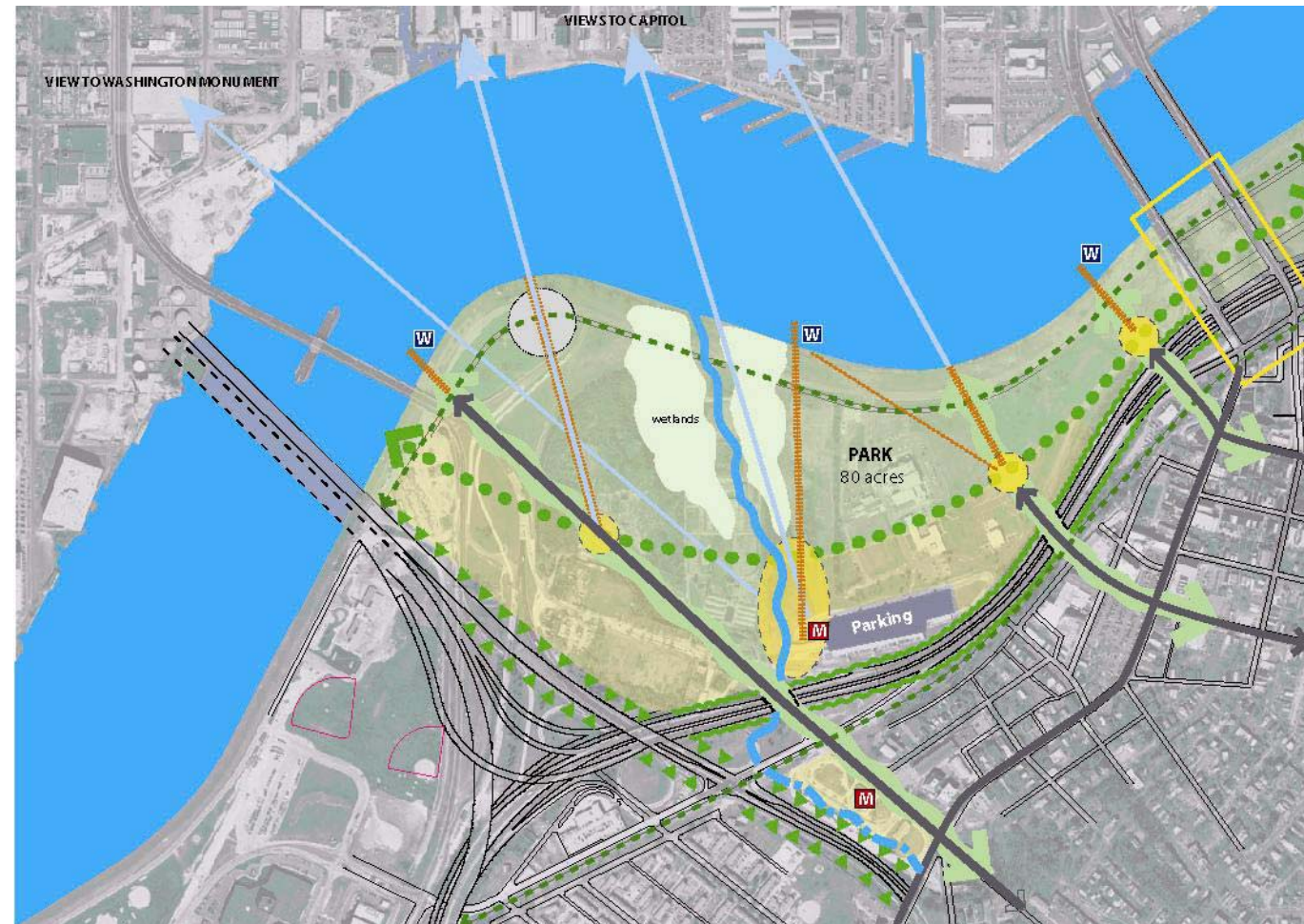


Figure 49: Urban design framework for Poplar Point



- Embrace restored wetlands as an attractive, central feature of the park, including appropriate educational and interpretative facilities
- Remember the history of the site, its surrounding community and its leaders – featuring their stories in the park through interpretive programs, and design elements.

Park Edge

- Frame the park with a gracious new crescent edge – an attractive new park road giving identity and a new address to cultural and mixed-use neighbors along the edge of the park.
- Establish cultural landmarks along the edge securing a sense of public use and access.
- Screen visibility of the METRO garage from users of the park by using the parcels in front of it for educational, cultural, or institutional uses.
- Feature the Anacostia METRO access as a major arrival point in the park with orientation, visitor facilities and shuttle bus access.
- Give special review of building facades facing the park – seeking articulation, quality materials, some consistency in pattern and texture for mixed-use buildings allowing some variation for signature public uses
- Maintain a pattern of blocks and access roads that encourages easy access to the park and a sense of park penetrating to the surrounding community area.

Cultural/Mixed Use Development Area

South of the Crescent Park Road, the plan calls for cultural, educational and mixed-use areas to line the park, expand economic development benefits and link to the existing community. Development of this area, including already zoned areas and future development areas such as along Howard Road extension, on the METRO bus site or at the Gateway should be subject to a full set of urban design

and development guidelines. Key design principles are include here as a first step toward that goal.

- The scale and pattern of development blocks in Poplar Point should be compatible with the fine-grained pattern found in Historic Anacostia and encourage pedestrian character and human scale.
- Massing, height and bulk of buildings should respect adjacent park uses and permit public views to the River; the elevation along the crescent should have a scale sensitive to the scale of surrounding buildings.
- New streets must form a network with existing streets extending the neighborhood across the freeway to private parcels in Poplar Point.
- Links from the community to the River should be enhanced through the improvement of Howard Road, W Street, and Good Hope Road. W Street should be extended into the Park and all streets should be designed to have sidewalks, trees, and pedestrian-oriented streetscape.
- Street improvements should extend to MLK Avenue and into the community, linking ongoing and potential community initiatives such as the new Gateway development, the future WMATA joint development opportunity, infill sites along MLK, Frederick Douglass House, and Anacostia Museum to new Park programs.
- Ground floors on public streets should be reserved for publicly accessible uses including neighborhood serving retail, visitor amenities, and cultural facilities. Entry points into the Park should be appropriately marked by a public oriented use.
- Uses within Poplar Point should be oriented to the Park and River; Entries should open onto public streets to create an urban pattern in keeping with the neighborhood character of East of the River communities.
- A green buffer along the new route of the Suitland Parkway approaching a redesigned Frederick Douglass Bridge should be accommodated.



4 Economic Vitality

Tangible new investment in Historic Anacostia will arise from a powerful convergence of forces including:

- Investment in major environmental remediation of Poplar Point
- Investment in extensive new landscape/park construction, park roads and pathways
- Investment in new significant museums, gardens and memorials putting Poplar Point on the visitor's map of the District
- Construction of new mixed-use development
- Economic development resulting from new population in the area – residents, workers, visitors to the park
- Jobs and entrepreneurial business opportunities

Links to culture, recreation, education

Community groups have noted the potential benefits to neighborhood vitality that should also result from expanded cultural, recreational and educational uses at Poplar Point Park. With appropriate recruitment, training, design and operations planning, working with members of the Anacostia community, the greatest benefit can be realized from investment on the site. Among the benefits targeted for Poplar Point and vicinity are:

Educational Uses – Educational uses invited to Poplar Point may range from smaller environmental centers and interpretative facilities linked to park improvements, wetlands restoration and the telling of the Anacostia River story to independent educational institutions (Smithsonian, Universities etc.) that might choose to locate on the designated cultural or mixed use sites surrounding the new improved park. Benefits clearly might include easy access to education and training, expansion of Anacostia educational resources for youth and adults, job

opportunities in operations and teaching positions and potential sponsorship by community groups.

Cultural Facilities – A wide range of cultural facilities have been described in the previous chapter as appropriate for areas within and surrounding Poplar Point Park. Ranging from memorials to full-scale museums and performance facilities, the intensity of neighborhood benefits will vary. Some of the uses discussed grow directly out of the interests and history of the Anacostia community, its heroes and its fascinating history – brining those stories to a national audience. Community leaders have also supported the benefits of bringing cultural facilities of district-wide and national interest in wide-ranging topic area to this site – recognizing the value to local residents of easy access to broad cultural resources.

Recreational Facilities – With a sensitivity to park management demands, knowing that the existing Anacostia Park facilities reach overflow usage in summer months, new recreational facilities will offer benefits of expanded use and job creation to the surrounding neighborhoods. Seeing Poplar Point as one anchor in a much improved riverfront park, use of the Anacostia Metro Station, shuttle bus routes through the park, improved access points over Route 295 can be envisioned as a dramatically improved gateway to recreational resources worthy of their National Park status.

Opportunities for Youth

A significant focus on youth must be a part of all plans for Poplar Point Park. Though the work of the Earth Conservation Corps and local school districts, there is already a growing group of young people interested in the future of the Anacostia River and responsible treatment of the lands along its banks. Other youth are invited to enjoy the river through participation at the boat clubs and special events on the river. In the largest numbers, youth teams and individual sports enthusiasts now use the larger Anacostia Park and portions of Poplar Point for sports activities throughout the year.

With the improvements at Poplar Point come a variety of opportunities for youth involvement and leadership:



- Continued participation in planning and design for Poplar Point
- Youth advisory boards and commissions for cultural, educational and recreational initiatives
- Speakers bureau on Poplar Point and Anacostia Waterfront Initiative to visit local schools and youth groups
- Forward looking program of targeted training for jobs, management and ownership positions related to park and surrounding mixed-use activity
- Youth Access – a model program that could link to the major transportation initiatives planned for METRO, shuttle systems, water transportation, walking, bicycles, and long-term rebuilding of highways and bridges
- Youth participation in recruiting of the best in cultural institutions to locate at Poplar Point
- Invitation for participation in youth training programs by the National Park Service for careers in park jobs and management.
- Training in environmental remediation and restoration – applicable at Poplar Point and throughout the region.

Development Program Analysis for Poplar Point

The plan for Poplar Point comprises of a few distinct areas where development is proposed. These are defined in terms of ‘sectors’ in the diagram and chart below. The layout and parcels shown in the plan may accommodate a variety of uses. A final program will depend on the market as well as on the priorities of the District and the neighborhood. However, a preliminary analysis suggests two potential options – one has a residential focus and the other a more mixed-use focus for the Howard Road sector. The table below outlines the two options and compares them with existing conditions and current zoning. A PUD overlay is suggested to allow for appropriate use, density, and design at Poplar Point.

Sector	Existing Uses	Site Area	Zoning	Gross Build-out Alternatives Option 1	Option 2
Sector 1:					
Private sites along Howard Road including new area extending to the River	Ramps to existing Frederick Douglass Bridge; auto-related uses; 2-story apartment buildings	29 acres (1,263,000 sf)	Part W-3 (11 acres) Max FAR 6.0 Non Res. FAR 5.0 Part Unzoned (GOV)	Residential (multifamily); neighborhood retail. 60 - 150 units/acre net = 1740 - 4350 units (Max FAR=3.5 NET)	Mixed use (residential, office, institutional); neighborhood retail; cultural use (Max FAR = 6.0)
Sector 2:					
Public uses screening the Metro garage	Former tree nursery; NPS heliport and office facility	11 acres (480,000 sf)	Unzoned (GOV)	Major cultural or institutional buildings. Apprx. 500,000 sf (FAR=1.0)	Community-serving uses such as community center, library, recreation center
Sector 3:					
Cultural and community uses at the River	Managed meadows; Anacostia Drive	selected sites	Unzoned (GOV)	Major museum at Point. Apprx. 275,000 sf (FAR=0.75)	Memorial at Point; recreation, community building to the south
Sector 4:					
Potential Metro joint development site	Metro station; potential site for expanded bus terminus	4.5 acres (196,000 sf)	W-3 Max FAR 6.0 Non Res. FAR 5.0	Residential over office; some neighborhood serving retail. (Max FAR = 6.0)	Office over retail (Max FAR = 6.0)
Sector 5:					
MLK corridor in Historic Anacostia	Retail, commercial, and residential establishments	–	C-3-A Max FAR 4.0 Non Res. FAR 2.5	Office with ground floor retail; current FAR limits are appropriate	Office and residential with ground floor retail; current FAR limits are appropriate

Table 1: Development Program Analysis for Poplar Point